

## [Tenant Trouble]

March 30, 1939.

[?]. J. Thompson (white).

Asheville-Leicester Highway,

Georgetown, N. C.

Dairy Farmer.

Anne [Winn?] Stevens, writer,

Douglas Carter, reviser. TENANT TROUBLE Original Names Changed Names

W. J. [Thompson?] Bill Turner

Arville Anders [Ben?] Andrews

Mr. Rogers Mr. Reynolds

Mrs. Anders Mrs. Andrews

(Unknown) Georgia (Turner)

"Clara (Andrews)

"Hazel (Turner)

"[Hal?] "

"Gene"

"Fred"

"Edith"

"[Sue?] " [CI - N. C. 12-41?] TENANT TROUBLE

"My father," said Bill turner, "[stand?] a corn [mill?] back in the mountains. It's an old-fashioned one with a big water wheel. One of my brothers still owns it. Pa was right proud of the meal he ground. He had it put up in [bags?] with his name stamped on each bag. all the country stores for miles around carried it. Pa made good money. When I was a kid, I used to help deliver the meal to [the?] storekeepers. I used to think I'd like to run the mill myself when I grew up. I did try it for two years after Pa died. I made good money, but the mill is located in an out-of-the-way place, and its surroundings are pretty wild. It's no place to raise a family these days.

"After I married, I took up dairying. My wife's oldest sister was married to a dairyman. You can see his place next door." He pointed to the [?] white farmhouse beside he tree-shaded stream near the highway, and to [its neat?] concrete barns and outbuildings. Two of her brothers was in the dairy business. They all live in this neighborhood. Naturally, I tried dairying. I've stuck to it right steady ever since, except the two years I tried running the corn mill.

"The biggest trouble a landowner has," Bill declares, "is getting men on his place who are willing to work. [Now?], 2 last year I had a [26-acre?] farm just out of town, and I put a man by the name of [?] Andrews to run it for me. I got Ben off the county. He's about 50 years old, and he's able-bodied. He has a wife and seven children. At that time they was all on relief. His wife was worin' in a sewing room, and they got commodities off the county.

"I rented the place from a Mr. [Reynolds?] for \$200 a year, and I thought I could raise most of my feed [are?]. It's a good farm. Most of my place here is pasture land, and I can't raise much feed, so I got Ben to move out there and run it. I furnished that [cuss?] a house,

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land, seed, a [?], and all the tools, and he was to get half the crops. I advanced him [0?] bushels of corn for his family, and we [out?] them 10 gallons of buttermilk at a time.”

“Yes, and Bill went soft,” said his [slis?], brown-haired, blue-eyed wife, “and was a sorry for Ben and his family that for a while he paid [??] a day besides.”

“Ben's a good farmer,” continued Bill, “and he started out well. He put in some good crops: corn, beans, peas, potatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, and tomatoes, and he had a patch of tobacco. When I put in a cannery for my wife, I put [one?] in for Mrs. Andrews, too.”

Georgia, Bill's wife, took up the story: “I canned our surplus vegetables with the help of Ben's daughter Clara.

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Bill paid Clara for helping me, and she lived with us. She's a nice, capable girl, just the age of my daughter [Hazel?], but while Hazel, who is 16 years old, is graduating this year from high school as valedictorian, Clara's family has moved about so much that she's just in the fifth grade. I wanted to keep her with us and send her to school with our children, but you never know how such people will turn out.

“I made an average of \$1 a day on the vegetables I canned and sold to the school cafeteria,” declared Georgia, “but Ben and his wife let their vegetables rot, quantities of them in their garden.”

“About the middle of the summer,” said Bill, “I found Ben was usin' my team to peddle whiskey. That's the last thing I'd stand for, so I told Ben the bootlegging would have to stop.”

“After that, Ben lost interest in the farm,” added Georgia, “and Bill has to get a lawyer after him to get the potatoes out of the ground.”

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"Yes, and he let [acres] of the corn burn up in the field; and the tobacco began disappearing out of the patch," interrupted Bill. "Ben was selling' it and keepin' all the money. I [chased?] around to all the toacco warehouses, but I never found any of the tobacco. Next thing I [?] that rascal was sellin' bootleg again. I could'a had him arrested, 4 of course, but I felt sorry for his wife and children."

"Bill discharged him then," said Georgia.

"What became of him?" I asked.

"He was arrested for bootlegging, and they bound him over to the [Hay tarn?] of court. He's out on bond."

"And his family?" I queried.

"Heaven knows!" said Georgia. "Back on relief, I reckon."

"Did you ever get a satisfactory tenant?"

"I didn't try, " Bill replied. "I couldn't afford to lose any more money fooling with tenants. Ben cost me enough. I didn't rent it this year. It'll be cheaper for me to buy whatever feed I have to have. Mr. Reynolds couldn't get a good sharecropper, either, and nobody wanted to rent the place for cash, so he got disgusted, tore down the house, and put the land in grass.

"I lost so much on that place last year that I don't believe I can send Hazel to college this fall unless she can get some work to help pay her expenses. My wife had to have an operation last summer, and that took a lot of money, too.

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"Of course, I have to have a tenant here to help me with the dairy, but there's no chance of losing money on him like I did on Ben. Anyhow, he's right here [?] I can watch him every day."

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The Turners live in a tree-shaded cottage on a hill fronting a paved highway and convenient to both school and town. From the cottage porch may be seen fields, scattered dwellings, and a wide pastor[?] of woods and mountains. "This house," said Georgia, "used to be up on the mountain until three years ago. Than Bill moved it down in sections to be near to the highway and the school buses."

Behind the cottage are the [concrete?] stalls for the cattle, and the bottling and refrigerating plants, for Bill does a retail business, delivering grade A milk form door to door at the county seat. His [herd?] and equipment meet the state specifications. On the grassy hills at the rear of the cottage, the [herd?] of 17 acres may be seen grazing. "I'd rather have a small head and have every cow in it good," said Bill, "Then have a large herd of poor cows. He get 34 gallons of milk a day."

Bill sells milk at 12¢ a quart, or two quarts for 25¢, the price agreed on by the retail dealers. "But all the dairymen don't stick by the agreement," Bill said. "Some of them cut prices so as to undersell the other dairies and build themselves a longer milk route."

Bill has trouble, also, in collecting. "Just the other day one customer told me," Bill [?], "that he couldn't pay as till fall, because he has two children graduating.

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"You ain't got nothin' on me," I told him. 'I got two children graduating myself. That's the reason I got to collet from you.'"

Bill is interested in [improving?] his property. "When I get time, I'm goin' to terrace the front yard, and build concrete steps down to the pond," he declared.

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Now, a trail [appearence?] the cottage directly from the highway, and a well-kept road [circles?] the hill to the garage and barns. On the roadside, halfway up the hill, is the new two-room cabin for the tenant family who help with the dairy. It is a picturesque structure of peeled logs, golden in color. With its tiny porch and clay chimney, it might have been taken out of the pages of a current magazine.

"Bill was putting it up for the boy who helped with the dairy," said Georgia, "but the boy quit before the cabin was finished."

The walls of the cabin are [cained?] with clay; but until the cracks are filled more carefully, the new tenant and his family would be just as comfortable on a sleeping porch.

"The boy who quit several weeks ago," said Georgia, "was a young, able-bodied man. Bill got him from the city hall. He was working the [PA?]. he has a wife and two children, and a third child on the way."

"Why did he quit?" I asked.

"He just didn't what to work long hours," answered Georgia.

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"He wanted hours like those on the [WPA?]. Now, on a dairy farm work begins at four-thirty and lasts till dark. It isn't so hard. There isn't much to be done during the day, but the worker must stay on the place, where he can be found if he is needed. If a cow got sick in the middle of the afternoon, he couldn't be found. Bill told him he must stay on the place so he quit. And he had the nerve to ask Bill to recommend him for another WPA job."

"What were you paying him?" I asked.

"Bill gave him a house to live in, all the firewood he needed, all the milk he and his family could drink, and \$1 a day."

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"I am determined," continued Georgia, "that our children shall know how to work, and be willing to do so. My people were farmers. We were poor, but we all learned to work. My brothers are all self-made men with good jobs. Two of them own dairy farms, one is a surveyor with the government, and one is a machinist with the power company. I keep my children at home afternoons. After they come in from school, I give each of them a task."

There are six children, the oldest 16, the youngest five years old.

"Hal and Gene help with the milking," she explained, "and in the summer they help Bill with the crops of corn, 8 hay, and [leapedeza?] he raised for the cattle."

Hal, 13 years old, and Gene, 11, are well [?] and intelligent. Hal is graduating this year from grammar school and is slautatorian. They belong to 4-H club and have [definite?] projects to work [?].

"Bill bought [Hall?] a full-blooded calf last year for him to raise as his project," Georgia said. "The calf cost \$50. Bill paid for it. After Hal raised it and exhibited it at the State experiment station, he sold it at a profit. Then he paid Bill back the \$50. His father whats to teach him to be businesslike and [manly?]."

As a reward for working well, the Turner boys are given three weeks vacation in summer camps. One week of this time they spend at the camp for boys at the State experiment farm. Even nine-year old Fred is to have a turn at camp this year. Edith, seven years old, and Sue, five, have their chores, too.

Hazel, just in from school, looked very pretty in her stylish new spring coat that matched perfectly her tawny hair. Her mother said, "Hazel's been very good about going to school when she had to wear shabby clothes. She said she had to study so hard, clothes didn't worry her. Day after day and wore the same old shirt and sweater. She's made such a good record we are going to give her a business 9 courses. She wants to be a secretary, but first we want to send her to college to take English, especially, because English

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is neglected in the public schools. I dropped out of school in the 10th grade. I was the youngest of 10 children. My mother was so hard-worked she didn't bother to make me go. But I know, now, I should have stayed in school longer. A mother needs all the education she can get."

Georgia is justly proud of her house. The living room is pleasant and tastefully furnished. [Immaculate?] net curtains are hung neatly at the windows. Dark green cushions in the wicker chairs, and bright sofa pillows on the upholstered davenport give an air of comfort. The floor is newly waxed. A white calfskin rug lies before the open fireplace, and smaller rugs harmonize with the general color schemes. In an alcove is a piano and a new radio. There are a few pictures on the walls, and a photograph or two. All is in good taste, and the color scheme suggests that Georgia is influenced by the current women's magazines. Through an open door can be seen a polished table in the dining room, and ferns in the windows.

Georgia herself is very attractive in appearance. Indoors she wears long, [modish?] housecoats that deepen the blue of her eyes. Her brown hair curls softly around her face, and is drawn into a knot at the back of her neck.

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She is tall and rather willowy, but looks rather worn for her 36 years. "I just can't get rid of this cold," she said huskily. "I guess I've been working too hard. Next week and I'm going to get some rest."

She is glad that Bill now has a good worker in the log cabin. "We were lucky to get him," she concluded. "He was a foreman in a cotton mill, and his young wife worked there, too. After the mill closed down, they lived for a while on their unemployment insurance. They have two little children. Bill pays him more than he usually pays because the man is



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industrious and reliable. But I don't see how his wife stands living in our little tenant cabin. I could never stand it, myself."